

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers. Published by Ralph F. Cummings, Box 75, Fisherville, Mass., U. S. A. Price \$1.00 per year or ten cents a copy.

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## THE ABANDONED FARM HOUSE by "Noname"

My son along with other High School lads, have for months had the habit of going on long hikes every Saturday, when weather permitted. They have pretty much explored the surrounding countryside within a radius of 20 miles from this city.

A few days ago after one of these hikes my son came home carrying a small bunch of old time story papers under his arm, plus a couple of old time dime novels.

One of the novels was one of the early Old Cap Colliers. The plain cover edition that sold for ten cents (#48 Neil Darragh, the Great Irish Detective). The other was Log Cabin Library #103 "Buffalo Bill at Wounded Knee." Both novels in fairly good condition. The story papers were New York Weeklies, Saturday Nights, Family Story Papers and Fireside Companions.

I asked my son where he had found this stuff and he replied, "I found this stuff in the attic of an old deserted farm house and Dad you should see the old dime novels that are there, but no good now, as they are all chewed to pieces by the rats and mice. But Dad, there are still several hundreds of these old story papers there in pretty good shape as well as several hundreds more that are destroyed beyond repair."

I explained to my son that he had no right whatever to enter this house even if deserted. He replied saying, "The barn has fallen down completely, part of the roof of the house has like-

wise fallen in and every window in the house is gone completely as well as the back door. There are no "No Trespassing" signs anywhere and with the house practically wide open, us fellows could see no real harm in entering, or in bringing away these old papers which no one else wanted."

He explained that the house was on a side road several miles off the main highway and a good half mile from the nearest house.

On hearing his description of the place I decided that I could do no real harm in going up and looking the situation over anyway. I should explain that this house is only about six miles from this city.

As I have no car myself, I called up my son-in-law explaining the situation to him and asking if he would take me up there. He replied that he would and in a few minutes he arrived with his car and also my daughter who wanted to go along with us.

So we started out, my son, my son-in-law and daughter and myself. I thought I knew all the roads and highways for fifty miles around here. But my son had found one here that I had never been on. It was an old country road about six miles long, extending across country from one main highway to another. A road very little used as its rough conditioned surface showed. An old fashioned dirt road, with about four or five houses on it. Run down farms from the looks of them.

We finally reached the house we were looking for and as my son had said, a good half mile or more from the nearest house where people lived.



We reached there just at twilight and a more dismal, forlorn sight I never saw. Here was the ruins of a once proud farm house built in the Colonial style so much in vogue throughout New England seventy-five to one hundred years ago. A big square two and a half story house and every window, as my son had said, completely missing. On the the right of the house was dense woods reaching up to within twenty feet of the house itself. In the rear was the tumbled down barn completely flat. Old sleighs and farm wagons could still be seen peeping out from the ruins. Just at the rear of the barn, more dense woods. At the left of the house and across the road were once fertile mowing fields now grown up to box alder and juniper, in many cases higher than a man's head. Truly a dismal sight to me, who was born and raised on a farm.

As I remarked before, it was twilight when we reached there. The old house with its windows gone located in those woods, seemed to stare at us with a personality of its own.

The thought came to me that if there ever was such a thing as a haunted house, here's the ideal locale and situation. However we saw no ghosts while there.

By this time I had lost all compunctions about entering the house. I thought, surely in all this wreck and ruin I can do no great harm in taking the old story papers that my son claims is here.

As in most old fashioned houses the windows were low and not over two feet from the ground. So we entered by simply stepping through one of the windows. The room we entered was evidently the "front room" or parlor. The floor was covered with old newspapers and all sorts of small rubble and dirt. Not a stick of furniture in the room, but what seemed very odd, was three huge old fashioned portraits still hanging on the walls. The large square frames over two feet square that were so common a generation ago. Still brave in their gold leaf and bright paint in defiance to the weather that had been entering the three broken windows for many years, evidently. The portraits were of two women and a man. Probably the original owners of the old ruin. All

other rooms on the first floor had more or less junk in them mostly worthless broken furniture.

On mounting to the second floor we discovered much the same thing. One room contained a sight that took me back over 40 years. It was an old fashioned cord-bed still in position, still corded up and on it was an old straw tick filled with corn husks. I wondered, how many years has that old bed stood there with the old tick of corn husks? I doubt not that many of you old timers who read this have slept on old cord-beds with a tick on it filled with straw or corn husks and a feather bed on top of that. I have as a lad, and would like to again. Especially if in an open attic and with the summer rain beating gently down upon the roof. No need to count sheep in those days.

Backward, turn backward, oh time in thy flight

Make me a boy again, just for tonight  
Give me an attic and my old cord-bed,  
A bloody dime novel and—well, nuff sed.

Another room on this second floor contained an old wooden loom used for weaving cloth. The first one I ever saw and I spent some time in examining it. As far as I could determine it was still in good condition and still serviceable. If it still is serviceable as I firmly believe, it should be worth a pot of money to whoever is the owner of that old ruin. And there must be an owner somewhere.

By this time it had become dark and by the aid of our searchlights we mounted to the attic. This also was full of worthless junk, old broken furniture, old clothing so rotten that it was falling apart, old barrels and boxes, worn out kitchen utensils and all sorts of worthless rubble. We had to fairly crawl over it all to reach the further end of the attic. And here was a sight to make a novel collector weep. Piles of story papers and old novels completely ruined by rats and mice.

New York Five Cent Librarys, Old Cap Colliers, War Librarys, N. Y. Detectives, Beadles Dime and Half Dime Librarys, etc. There must have been between 100 and 200 novels as near as I could estimate, all completely ruined. Some so badly that hardly enough of the heading was left to dis-



cover the kinds they were. It is possible, and I am inclined to think it true, that someone, sometime had been there and carried off all the novels that were not destroyed, overlooking the two that my son had found. As aside from the story papers ruined were many laying around that were not damaged to any great extent. And if some papers could escape the general ruin, why not a few dime novels? It only seems logical that if some papers escaped, some novels should also.

The bulk of the papers were in a big wooden box. Some few layers on the top of the heap frozen stiff due to rain coming through the old roof. After prying these off and throwing them aside we found that the mice had also been busy here. But a large part of them were in fair to good shape. There were too many of them for us to carry down out of the attic at one trip so we decided to each of us take an armfull and come back in daylight some other time and get the rest.

On the following Sunday we again visited the old house. This time in another corner of the attic I discovered a couple of flour barrels full of the same kinds of papers. Mice again busy here and only about half of them in presentable shape. Many others also frozen in piles to the floor. In all I got nearly 1000 papers with fully as many more left destroyed by rain and mice.

These papers when put away in the attic were without doubt in long runs of years. Now thanks to the rain and mice the runs are pretty much broken. On this trip in going over the rubble in the attic my son-in-law found a pair of real old time hand wrought fire tongs and my son found a couple of old Bibles, one published in 1808 and the other in 1818. I have since heard that this place was heirship property and after the death of the old couple that owned it, the heirs quarrelled over division of the property and no decision ever reached as to disposal. And house closed up pending decision. This was many years ago. Evidently no decision ever reached and vandals broke out the windows and carried away everything of any value. (I am a vandal, but a belated one, I guess.)

Now something about the papers themselves. While badly broken as to

runs there are still complete many fine serials in them. In N. Y. Weekly I have complete, "Little Buckshot, the White Whirlwind of the Prairie" and "The Cruise of the Grampus" both by Ned Buntline. Also "The Crime of a Countess" and "Tracked across the Atlantic," both by Nick Carter. And 51 short stories about Nick Carter. "The Carpenter of Rouen" by John Fletcher Cowan, "Miss Pauline of New York" by St. George Rathborne, and many others too numerous to mention.

In Fireside Companion have such complete serials as "After Dark in New York," "The Irish Monte-Cristo" "The King of the Shadows," "The Quiet Man in Black," "Old Sleuth's Luck," "Gasparoni, the Italian Detective," "Billy Joyce, the Government Special Detective," all by Old Sleuth. And many other good serials besides, too numerous to mention.

In Family Story Paper are complete serials such as the following: "The Girl Spy of the Shenandoah," "Libby Prison Bars," both by John De Morgan; "White Beauty; or, Robin the King of Horses," "Uncle Ned, the Hot Corn Man," both by T. W. Henshaw, and still other good ones.

Complete "love" serials in all the papers. I take it for granted that few, if any, of my readers are interested in this type of story, so have failed to mention any of them by title. In all I believe that there are 80 or more complete serials in the papers. I do not care to keep these papers as they are not the type of story papers that I like, and will if possible trade them off for stuff that I do like. Probably even before this article reaches print, some fellow collector will have the bulk of them.

— "NONAME"

## NOVELNUT NONSENSE

REJOICE BROTHERS and be exceedingly glad: Darwin notwithstanding, our great naturalist, Bro. Miller, after long and concentrated study of the large simians with the pink and purple fundaments, in the monkey-cage of the Zoo, has taken the positive position that we cannot be descended from monkeys because we simply are not that way. Send a nickel for a thesis on this no longer academic question, and a color-photo



verifying this momentuous discovery, is yours.

\* \* \*

**PAINFUL:** Brother Linville's goat, Prudence, a whiskered Angora, which set him back six berries, ate up his novels. As her milk has now soured on Carl, the best offer takes Prudence.

\* \* \*

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT** with thanks to Bro. Brezinski is made through our colyum, of the receipt of the stuffed snake he sent to Bro. LeBlanc. While Joe meant well, Ed says that he has seen snakes too often. He is therefore forwarding it to that sterling foe of John Barleycorn, Bro. McIntyre, whose coming lecture, illustrated with slides, will reveal the devastating effects of the Demon Rum when administered to a captive bob-cat and an old horse. We trust that it may give pause to some reckless Brother ere he sends another jolt of red-eye hissing down the hatch. Bro. Delbert Love's incomparable two-piece orchestra and some fake palms will adorn the picture.

\* \* \*

**CONTRAWISE;** if water rots the soles of one's boots, think what it must do to one's insides. Therefore, Bro. Armbreuster will hence-forward take charge of the Club's beer-parlor to guard the fragile flame of temperance among thoughtless Brethren whose zeal has put four faucets of the KLUB KEG on the fritz. The delicate linings of our members' stomachs must and shall be protected.

\* \* \*

**WITH A FEW CHOICE REMARKS,** and in a brilliant setting appropriate to the occasion, our honored member, Bro. Johannsen, presented our CLUB with a feather-duster. President Cummings, his voice husky with emotion, made fitting acknowledgment in a thirty-minute speech of acceptance, until, overcome by his feelings and forgetful of a small boil unhappily localized, he sat down on the favorite seat of our greatest Presidents and thinkers. It here becomes a painful duty to record that, during subsequent festivities, the feather-duster disappeared. A roll-call revealed that Bro. Bill Burns had lit-out for home. The issue remains in statu quo. It is well known however, that Persimmon Bill walks in his sleep during working

hours. This suspicious occurrence must be hushed-up.

\* \* \*

**WHAT IS THIS WE HEAR?** Bro. Frye's head no longer looks like a Chrysanthemum. He has had another hair-cut, appearing on the streets of Schenectady with a huge peony in his lapel and smelling to high heaven of musk. As Mary Ann Gash has resumed her status of Queen of the pajamas-department in the Laundry, Bob may soon be able to quit work, as he insists that sixty-five is a good age even for a turtle.

\* \* \*

**THE GREAT TOE** of Bro. Beck's left foot became so bedeviled with arthritis or some dad-gummed thing, that George chopped it off. The act of a hero. Floating in spirits, it may be seen at our office where it is much admired. It is a beautiful toe though showing wear. Thank you, George.

\* \* \*

**THE WICKED FLEE** when no man pursueth. We learn that Bro. Taylor has been located in Mexico. Come home, Charlie! Torchnose Jake has confessed. The kid has been returned. That lets you out this time.

## NEWSY NEWS

By Ye Editor

Brother L. C. Leighter has written a long letter to the Street & Smith Corp., 79 7th Ave., N. Y. asking them about reprinting some of the old stories once more, such as Log Cabin, Nick Carters, Buffalo Bills, Do & Dare, Comrades, and many other stories. Here is a letter he received from the Street & Smith Corp., May 29th, 1941.

Dear Mr. Leighter:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of May 23rd. We did re-issue a single number of the Jesse James Stories at the time the film depicting the adventures of Jesse James was released. It had a fair sale but nothing outstanding. There was a little demand for a subsequent number but practically negligible. You know the material that you refer to has been used over and over again through reprinting in the so-called five cent weeklies, and in the publication in paper book form by Beadle & Adams, M. J. Ivers, Westbrook, Frank



Tousey and last but not least, by Street & Smith.

Personally, we think enough of the authors like Standish, and Nick Carter to have arranged for the renewal of copyright of all the material they wrote.

Some way of offering these stories to the American reading public will undoubtedly present itself when we settle down to quiet reading again.

You may rest assured that we will take a great deal of pleasure in carrying out your suggestion when there is any assurance that the five cent weekly characters can be galvanized into vigorous action again.

Many thanks.

Street & Smith Publications, Inc.

Yours very truly,

H. W. Ralston, Vice President

Brother Leighter believes if we all write to the Street & Smith Corp., that we'll get results, sooner or later. What do you say fellows!

Brother Leighter saw the title "Double Dan, the Bastard," among a list of titles in the Beadles Dime Library, which appeared on pages at the end of no. 53. (Ye editor also saw it listed on back of B. Dime no. 587.) And not on the front pages of either 53 or 587. We don't want the fellows to think it was made up, so if they will look over a number of these lists on back of B. D. L. they will find it.

Brother Don Learnard calls attention of Ye Editor to the following warning against an old offender taken from page 139 of Railroad Magazine for May 1941: EARL FARMER, probably somewhere in North Carolina writes to names listed here (The Switch List) asking you to send him money for books, magazines, etc., he doesn't own. Even a prison term for misuse of mail has failed to cure him of this practice. R. C. C. (Railroad Camera Club) members are advised to be on their guard.

Here is a bit of sad news that both Brothers Jonas and Gander sent in, that Barry Ono, England's largest collector of old Penny Dreadfuls and Bloods of a past decade, died May 13, 1941. The world's most complete collection of "penny dreadfuls," including, "Sweeny Todd," "Springheeled Jack," and "Black Bess, or the Knight of the Road," have been bequeathed

to the British Museum in the will of Barry Ono, comedian, who died at Barnstaple, Eng. He started collecting them 50 years ago, when he would cover them with brown paper and loan them out to friends. Today, the collection is valued at \$20,000.

Eddie Smart, Mt. Vernon, Maine, writes "Sure like your Round-Up, and did I get a kick out of "Jonnie Jones diary that started in the June 1931 issue. In the second installment, telling about a ball game, Jonnie said, "We'd have won, but Ed. Smart said he wusant out when he wuz." Eddie said he laughed and laughed over that.

Charles H. Austin of East Rockaway, N. Y. was up here to see Ye Editor. He came up Saturday at midday, and went back Sunday morning at 10 A. M., June 1-2, 1941. Charlie didn't get a chance to see all my stuff. Ed. Morrill was also here Saturday, with his secretary, Mr. Vail; also Richard Whitmore of Ashland, Mass. We had quite a gathering, and oh yes, have you seen Ed. Morrill's new catalogue no. 4, just out, it is the berries. 100 pages of miscellaneous books of all kinds for sale, from the complete "Currier & Ives," to "World War Posters." First editions galore and what-not. How about a copy, price 50c. East Lynne, Thelma, John Halifax, Gentleman and Fist Violin, etc. See ad on last page.

Frisco Bert Couch had a fine article on Nick Carter. Now another party writes in that John Coryell wrote the three first Nick Carter stories in the New York Weekly, so if that's the case, John Coryell must of originated Nick, just like Harry Enton, whose right name is Harry Cohen, originated the first four Frank Reade stories. No doubt Eugene Sawyer started where Coryell left off. An article by John Coryell's son appeared in The Bookman in 1929.

Gilbert Patten is now up in Maine. If you want to write him, he is at "Freedom's Shores, Camden, Maine.

Cornelius Shea had an electric man in Golden Hours which started in no. 584, April 8th, 1899; as a serial title—The Wonderful Electric Man or The Mysteries of the Enchanted Valley, by Cornelius Shea.

Ye editor saw Robert Taylor as "Billy the Kid," at a movie in Falmouth, Mass., June 9th, 1941. In fine

colors, like in "Old Chicago."

Harold C. Holmes and Charles Bragin also have complete sets of Tip Top Weekly.

How's this: — Irvin's Six-Penny Tales No. 2. Title—The Log Fort; has 68 pages, and published by Irvin & Co., in 1868, on Nassau St., New York. Has grey brown covers like the Munro Novels.

This is a rare one. Who knows anything about this novel?

Please send all information in to Ye Editor or to George French, Keezer Falls, Maine, where he will be for the summer.

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Anything published by Beadles, Starr, Munro, Tousey, DeWitt, Street & Smith, etc.

Before 1910

Please send lists of what you have to sell or trade, also your wants.

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